

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

City of Ankeny, Iowa

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines regarding the use of the City of Ankeny's electronic communication systems. For purposes of this policy, electronic communication includes but is not limited to:

- Electronic Mail (e-mail)
- Instant messaging
- Internet/Intranet/Extranet access
- Land and cellular telephone and voice mail systems
- Audio and video conferencing systems
- Facsimile messages

This policy has been adopted to protect City employees who use the electronic communication systems and to protect the City. Inappropriate use of electronic communication may result in embarrassment to the City of Ankeny and to you. This policy is applicable to all City employees and officials.

Usage

Employees are encouraged to utilize electronic communication as an appropriate means of communication and research to improve the quality and productivity of employees. Employees shall use these services responsibly and they shall not be used to transmit any improper communications, such as messages which are derogatory, defamatory, or obscene. Use of these communications shall be limited primarily to City business purposes. Use of electronic communication for non-City business purposes is discouraged during work hours. Employees who are terminated, laid off, or on an extended leave of absence have no rights to the contents of their e-mail messages and are not allowed to access the electronic communication systems. Regarding electronic mail:

- Users should include a brief subject describing the purpose of the message (to minimize loss due to SPAM filters).
- Message length should be as short and concise as possible.
- Proper grammar, language, and punctuation should be used.

Privacy

The City reserves the right to monitor electronic communication without prior notification to employees. Users should have no reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of these resources. All electronic communication systems are subject to all state and federal rules and laws including the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986.

Public Information

Electronic communication is considered to be a public record and may be subject to public disclosure in accordance with applicable law. Electronic communication may be retained and should not be deleted prior to archiving. As is common in business and other organizations, it is the City's current practice that all information stored on the electronic mail system, voice mail system, and computer network is normally copied daily to digital tape to provide a back-up copy in the event original records are damaged. These tapes are retained for a period of weeks or months. Electronic mail and voice messages deleted by an individual user after the City's daily backups may be retained for this period of time. After the retention period the tapes are normally re-used. The City may change these and other operational practices from time to time. Archives may be retained for historical usage periods if dictated by law.

Security

Generally, electronic communication systems are not secure. This is true for the City's systems as well. Employees using these systems should assume that their messages can be intercepted or monitored. Users should not share their system passwords with anyone other than a supervisor or network administrator.

Permissible Use

Employees shall use the electronic communication systems primarily for the purpose of conducting City of Ankeny business relating to the mission, function and work tasks of the City of Ankeny. Provisions for incidental personal use are outlined later in this policy.

Prohibited Uses

The City of Ankeny's electronic communication systems may not be used for illegal or wrongful purposes. Authorized users may not use the City's electronic communication systems to:

- Infringe the copyright or other intellectual property rights of third parties;
- Violate or infringe on the rights of any other person, including the right to privacy;
- Distribute defamatory, false, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or otherwise biased, discriminatory, or illegal material. Upon receiving such material, employees should instruct the sender (if sender is an acquaintance, friend or relative of the employee) to no longer send such material to their work place.
- Violate City regulations prohibiting sexual harassment;
- Restrict or inhibit other users from using the system or the efficiency of the computer systems;
- Solicit funds;
- Gamble;

- Promote or distribute political messages;
- Conduct “spoofing” i.e. construct your message to appear to be from someone else;
- Conduct “snooping” i.e. obtain access to the electronic communication of others without their permission;
- Attempt unauthorized access to data, breach security, or intercept any electronic communication on any system without proper authorization.

Personal Use

Employees should limit personal use of the City’s electronic communication systems to usage that:

- Is outside of work hours. (i.e. break, lunch, before or after work)
- Is incidental and infrequent.
- Does not interfere with the job performance of the employee or co-workers.
- Does not generate a direct cost to the City (a direct cost example is a long distance personal fax or phone call).
- Does not interfere with or burden the e-mail or internet access systems.
- Is in compliance with all other sections of this policy.

Violations

The use of the City’s electronic communication systems is a privilege afforded to authorized users. This privilege may be revoked at any time for violations of this policy. The City Manager or a designee will evaluate violations of this policy on a case by case basis. Employees found to have violated this policy, or to have engaged in illegal or unethical practices, will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include termination of employment and criminal prosecution.

The City has and reserves the right to make changes, additions, or deletions to the contents of this policy at any time.